(d) MRTS Scheme in Chennai is being executed in a phased manner. At present phase-II from Thirumayilai to Velacheri is in progress. The execution of the proposal for phase III from Velacheri to St. Thomas Mount depends upon financially viability of the project, availability of resources and requisite clearances, so no target date is fixed.

Train between Kuppam and Bangalore

2611. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to introduce a new daily train between Kuppam and Bangalore, leaving Kuppam at 8 A.M. and Bangalore at 5 P.M. in view of developmental activities in and around Kuppam in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if so, by when it is likely to be introduced; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) to (c) 6519/6520 Bangalore-Bangarapet Express (daily) has been extended to Jolarpettai via Kuppam from 1.7.2002. 6520 Express leaves Bangalore at 1730 Hours (5.30 P.M.). Introduction of additional train between Bangalore and Kuppam has been examined but not found feasible due to operational and resource constraints.

Transfers due to Bifurcation of Railways Zones

2612. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has assessed the number of personnel that would be required for seven new Railway Zones being created; and

(b) the number of persons who would be transferred / dislocated as a result of bifurcation of the existing Zones?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) Around 1500 personnel would be required for each of the seven new Railway Zones being created.

(b) The staff is to be transferred to the new Zones by taking options. Enough number of staff is expected to register their willingness for transfer to the new Zones for meeting the requirements. Number of staff required to be transferred will be according to the number of posts commensurate with the workload.

Gauge conversion of rail lines

2613. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the present status of gauge conversion of existing rail lines in the country; particularly in the NER;

(b) the details of those conversion works, running behind the schedule and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the necessary steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) Under Project Uni-gauge, gauge conversion of 9000 km of MG / NG lines has been done up to 31.3.2002. Further, gauge conversion of about 8500 km is in progress. On N.E. Railway, gauge conversion of 1137 km. of MG/NG lines has been done upto 31.3.2002. Further gauge conversion of 1543 km is in progress out of existing 2757 km of MG lines.

(b) Keeping in view the overall availability of resources, the targets are fixed on yearly basis. The works are being progressed and completed as per these targets.

(c) Additional funds have been generated through participation of State Governments, beneficiaries and other sources. This will provide additional resources to speed up the works.

Railway Policy

2614. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH 'LIBRA':
DR. ABRAR AHMED:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are seriously considering to lay down a National Railway Policy, in the near future; if so, the details thereof; and